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# GEAR UP Michigan!

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GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, was established by the 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The mission of the federal GEAR UP program, administered by the United States Department of Education, is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. This done by promoting academic excellence through a variety of locally designed early intervention services.

Governor John Engler selected the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) as the state's designated agency to apply for GEAR UP funding through the competitive process. In 2001, MDCD was awarded a five-year grant of \$11.8 million for GEAR UP Michigan!

Districts designated for GEAR UP Michigan! programs and services are Flint Community Schools in partnership with Central Michigan University, Muskegon Public Schools, and Detroit Public Schools. In keeping with federal requirements, services begin no later than 7th grade and continue with the same students through graduation. School districts receiving funding must be districts in which at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Act. All students in the grade receive services, regardless of economic status.

Of the total \$11.8 million, \$6.2 million of the funding is dedicated to scholarships. The scholarship funds will be administered by the Michigan Department of Treasury. Ninety-two percent of the funding will be spent at the local level, with the remaining eight percent at the state level. All funding requires a 100 percent match with state and local funds.

In the first year of GEAR UP Michigan! thousands of students will receive services such as academic counseling, Educational Development Plans, after-school tutoring, career and college preparation assistance, mentoring, and financial aid workshops, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers and counselors.

The Governor's Workforce Investment Board will serve as Michigan's state advisory board for GEAR UP Michigan! to provide oversight, offer recommendations, promote dialogue, and support local projects.

MDCD is also working in partnership with three groups in Michigan who have independently applied for and received GEAR UP funding from the U.S. Department of Education in the form of "partnership grants":

- Western Michigan University in partnership with Battle Creek Public Schools and Bangor Public Schools
- Oakland University in partnership with the School District of the City of Pontiac
- Lake Michigan College in partnership with Benton Harbor Area Schools

MDCD is partnering with all three groups to extend professional development opportunities and coordinate Web sites, parent and student materials, and resources available through MDCD. Coordination activities such as this are required as a part of the grant agreement.

For more information on GEAR UP Michigan!, call the Michigan Department of Career Development toll-free at 1-866-MY GOALS (voice and TTY).